

UNITY OF THE EMPIRE.

FAREWELL DINNER

TO

R. G. HALIBURTON, Esq., Q.C.,

Member of Council of Royal Colonial Institute.

(From KENTISH MERCURY, May 26th, 1876.)

OUR readers will learn with regret that Mr. Haliburton, familiar in the world of literature under the *nom de plume* of Sam Slick, Jun., and son of the eminent wit, Judge Haliburton, who first made that name famous—known also widely and favourably to the electors of this borough, is about to return to Canada, after a stay of five years in London. As a recognition of the valuable services he has rendered to the Colonies and the Empire in helping to defeat the policy of Imperial disintegration which lately threatened us, and which he stoutly resisted, a number of gentlemen entertained him at dinner on Friday evening of last week, at the Westminster Palace Hotel. The committee, in their invitations, referred to the fact that from his father having been during the greater part of his life the foremost advocate of Colonial interests, the name has been associated with our Colonial Empire for more than half a century. The Hon. Evelyn Ashley, M.P.,* occupied the chair, and E. Jenkins, Esq., M.P., the vice-chair. Among those present were—Mr. J. E. Liardet, Mr. Alexander MacArthur, M.P., formerly an Australian M.I.C., Captain Bedford Pim, M.P., Mr. Boord, M.P., Rev. G. L. Badenoch, LL.D., Mr. Geo. Cruikshank (the veteran artist), Mr. Alexander Rivington (the late proprietor of the "St. James' Magazine" which he also named the "United Empire Review"), Mr. F. W. Chesson (Secretary of the

* Under Secretary for the Colonies in 1877.

Aborigines Protection Society), Sir W. Drake, K.C.B., Sir Richard Wilbraham, K.C.B., A. Mackie, Esq., Dr. Sayle, Mr. B. Irvine, C.B., Mr. A. L. Haliburton, C.B., Dr. Leitner, Mr. James Watson, Major Alexander Moncreiff, C.B., and others.

Letters were read from Mr. Alderman McArthur, M.P., the Right Hon. H. C. C. Childers, Mr. Macfee (late member for Leith), and Mr. J. A. Froude, cordially sympathising with the object of the dinner. A letter was also subsequently received by the guest of the evening from Lord George Hamilton, who it was expected would have presided, in which he explained that there was some misunderstanding on the subject between himself and the committee. His Lordship writes:—"We have been associated together for some years past on one or two objects. Your work is bearing good fruit in the various schemes of confederation which are in different parts of the Colonial Empire springing up, and I was therefore all the more annoyed to find that from a misunderstanding, for which I cannot account, my unavoidable absence from the post I was expected to take would seem to many a slight upon the very man I was anxious to honour."

The Chairman, after proposing "The Queen," gave the health of "Mr. Haliburton," and referred to his connection with Colonial questions, and, above all, the important one of the Unity of the Empire.

Mr. Haliburton referred in a very happy manner to several veteran advocates of the interests of the Colonies who were then present, and who had been the pioneers in the movement against the disintegration clique that was for a time threatening to break up the Empire by stealth. Among these friends of the Colonies were Mr. Jenkins, Capt. Bedford Pim, Mr. Chesson, Mr. Rivington, Mr. McArthur, and others. The policy of that disintegration clique, mainly composed of permanent officials and their associates, was avowedly to "confederate the Colonies and to let them go." We still adhere to this policy of confederation, but the people of England have repudiated the policy of "weaning the Colonies" so soon as they are confederated. He gave a sketch of the rise of confederation in 1865, the honours

showered on Canadian statesmen who assented to it, the significant change in the tone of the Colonial Office to the people of Canada that then followed—Governor-Generals sent out to invite Canadians to go if so disposed—the withdrawal of the troops, and even of the British flag,—the ostentatious sacrifice of Canadian rights in the Washington Treaty, and the fact that while honours, and even peerages, were given to men who had been identified with the disintegration movement, the cold shoulder was given to the public men of the new Confederation. He then referred to the conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and the good it did, and to the efforts made by the late Mr. Howe and himself to force the insidious encroachments of disintegration upon the attention of the public. The debate on the Colonies in 1873 showed that there was no disintegration party—that the Liberals as well as the Conservatives scouted it. The first time that the issue was raised was at the hustings at the Greenwich election in 1873. A lecture was given to the Conservative Association at Woolwich by Mr. Haliburton on the necessity of a "National policy and a United Empire," which will be remembered by our readers. A few days after, Sir David Salomons died, and in the contest which ensued, and which resulted in the election of Mr. Boord, this issue was prominently presented. The triumphant results of that election astonished both parties, and largely influenced the policy and the success of the Conservative party at the General Election.

Mr. Haliburton later in the evening paid a well-merited compliment to the memory of the late Mr. C. W. Eddy, secretary of the Royal Colonial Institute. The following extract from a letter written by him as to the lecture at Woolwich shows how cordially he sympathised with the struggle against disintegration :

"I hope very much to be able to attend your meeting at Woolwich this evening. But in case I should be prevented, I write a line to say how cordially I sympathize with your efforts to promote the cause to which, as you are aware, I have devoted my best efforts, that, namely, of arousing public opinion to some adequate conception of the importance of our Colonies and of the grandeur of that Empire which

our statesmen have of late years appeared ready and even eager to relinquish. Wishing you all success in this great cause,—I am, yours, &c.”

Mr. Haliburton doubted greatly whether the assurance which the Government, through Mr. Stanhope, gave to the House last year is quite correct, that “the disintegration idea is dead.” So long as any of those who were its advocates had any voice in Colonial matters there could be no guarantee that what had been done before would not be done again. It, at least, became the duty of the friends of the unity of the Empire to watch most closely any symptoms of a revival of what had been repudiated with scorn by the people of England. We should take very great care that there is no ground for suspicion that in our dealing with the Colonies we are practically carrying out the policy of the past which a permanent Under Secretary of State avowed to a Colonial Governor: “It is the fixed policy of the Government to confederate the Colonies and to let them go.”

The next toast, proposed by Mr. Jenkins, M.P., was “The Unity of the Empire,” which was responded to by Mr. A. McArthur, M.P., and Mr. Alexander Rivington.

The memory of the late Judge Haliburton was proposed by Sir Richard Wilbraham, K.C.B., and appropriately responded to by Mr. Haliburton.

The proceedings closed with the health of the Chairman, which was proposed in a characteristic speech by Mr. E. Jenkins, and supported by Major Moncrieff.